

**Revised DRAFT Goals  
September 21, 2006**

**SUSTAINABLE NORTHAMPTON**

**Sustainable Northampton Vision**

- Continuously strive to achieve equitable social, economic and environmental vitality for the citizens, community and natural landscape of Northampton, for our children, our children's children, and future generations.
- Integrate the growth of our city in order to promote the equitable social and economic vitality of our citizens and community with the protection of natural resources and enhancement of the natural and built environment. (For present and future generations)

*During focus group discussions there was consistent support for and interest in sustainability. There was some confusion or disagreement as to the definition of sustainability and what is and isn't sustainable in practice, but there was strong support for brainstorming goals and objectives.*

**I. ENVIRONMENT, LAND USE AND, TRANSPORTATION**

**Environment, Land Use and, Transportation Vision**

The overall environment, land use and, transportation vision for Northampton is to maintain Northampton's character of a mix of urban areas, rural areas, local farms, and identifiable neighborhoods with distinctive personalities. To this end, the vision includes the preservation and enhancement of agricultural, recreational, and natural resources (including plant and animal habitats and corridors). An economically thriving downtown is vital to the community therefore, enhancement of the natural and built environment is encouraged, as is a concentration of services and mix-used development in this area. In order to become a leader in energy conservation and reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases, improve the quality of life of its citizens, and increase access to resources, the sustainable Northampton vision calls for expanded local transit services, bike lane system, and rail trail connections.

*From the focus group discussions and survey, as well as past plans, it is clear that Northampton residents want to preserve the environment and historic land use patterns in a way that goes beyond platitudes. It is also clear that most residents want to do this not by creating a community hostile to development but by channeling development into appropriate areas. Likewise, the community wants more measures and investments to preserve our environment and reduce energy costs and uses. Developing a land use and transportation pattern to implement this is the challenge.*

Based on information collected in the focus groups, surveys, and previous comprehensive plans, the following seven goals, and pursuant objectives, and strategies have emerged as defining principles to guide Northampton toward sustainable development in the areas of environment, land use and transportation.

## **Goal 1: Protect valuable and sensitive ecological resources (land, air, water, habitat, species)**

### **Objectives**

1. Preserve existing pristine and agricultural areas
2. Protect rare and endangered plants and animals and important wildlife corridors
3. Protect wetlands so there is no net loss (Northampton has approximately 3000 acres of wetlands). Prioritize and preserve quality wetlands in outlying areas by encouraging development in densely populated areas
4. Protect and conserve drinking water supplies (surface and groundwater, recharge areas, aquifers)
5. Preserve floodplains
6. Maintain the primarily open and agricultural nature of the Meadows with no new residential lots and no significant increase in residential density.
7. {The final plan should include an analysis of desired outcomes/benchmarks and what is currently achievable in policy and regulatory decision-making, update benchmarks as conditions change and compare benchmarks regionally and nationally.}

### **Strategies and Actions:**

1. Acquire additional parcels, especially those that provide corridors and link existing parcels. According to MassGIS 13.76% of Northampton is protected open space. According to Mass Audubon, as of May 2003, approximately 19% of Massachusetts land area was permanently protected ([www.massaudubon.org/PDF/advocacy/losingground/LosingGround\\_1.pdf](http://www.massaudubon.org/PDF/advocacy/losingground/LosingGround_1.pdf))
2. Adopt proposed wetland ordinance (I think we should leave this out since it is under discussion now and likely will be decided before the plan is completed.)
3. Minimize regulatory burden on existing homes and businesses within the Meadows
4. Sustain existing uses in the Meadows in order to prevent conversion to new uses
5. Adopt water conservation measures and improve quality and appearance of public water supply.

### **Benchmarks:**

By 2026, preserve at least \_\_\_% of Northampton as permanently protected conservation, park, farm, and recreation land

## **Goal 2: Enhance recreation areas and programs**

### **Objectives**

1. Expand existing recreation areas and public and private entertainment venues (including the fair grounds) with respect for existing neighborhoods.
2. Increase availability of recreational and educational programs for youths, adults, and seniors, including multigenerational activities.

### **Strategies and Actions:**

1. Provide safe and affordable youth activities (youth center, skate park, youth night life.)

**Benchmarks:**

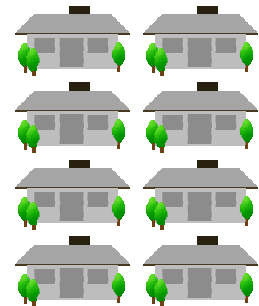
**Goal 3: Reduce Community and City's energy demand and natural resource consumption and increase climate protection.**

**Objectives**

1. Reduce city single-use disposable items and increase recycling from multi-family homes
2. Facilitate the development and construction of LEED ("green") certified new municipal buildings with the goal that *all* new buildings are such
3. Incorporate green building standards into the rehabilitation process for municipal buildings
4. Reuse brownfield sites
5. Encourage reuse and rehabilitation of existing buildings
6. Encourage private developers to undertake parking demand management and institute parking demand management for city employees (to reduce the number of single occupancy trips)
7. Ensure that large scale development of "greenfield" sites be "green" development with minimal effect on natural or energy resources.
8. Improve quality of stormwater discharges

The new LEEDS certified Senior Center with a geothermal system will emit **23%** less carbon dioxide than a comparable standard building.

That's a difference of 125,663 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> per year or the offset equivalent of more than 8 households.



**Strategies & Actions:**

1. Reconstitute and revitalize a new Northampton Energy Resources Commission. This commission should have the ability to collect data, proactively examine alternative, renewable, and sustainable energy options (i.e. solar power, vegetable oil and biodiesel options, methane digester power, and hydropower from the Connecticut and Mill rivers), implement the energy goals of this plan and, coordinate community education efforts.
2. Update the inventory for climate protection and prepare and implement a plan for climate protection.
3. Focus on conservation and efficiency.
  - a. Prepare and implement a year-round energy conservation plan for the city as a means of providing a resource guide on simple energy-saving measures.
  - b. Provide incentives for new construction to meet high efficiency standards.
  - c. Emphasize restoration and preservation of existing housing and building stock to incorporate up-to-date energy standards.
  - d. Provide incentives for old technologies to be replaced with newer, cleaner, and more efficient ones.

- e. Be responsible landfill stewards. Recover landfill gas for energy use.
  - f. Increase the participation in compost programs.
4. Increase City's participation in clean energy programs.

**Benchmarks:**

1. By 2026, city government energy use should be \_\_\_\_% lower than 2006 levels.
2. By 2026, Northampton per capita energy use and greenhouse gas emissions should be \_\_\_\_% lower than 2006 levels.
3. By 2026 \_\_\_\_% of new construction should be LEED certified.
4. By 2026 \_\_\_\_% of the municipal energy and \_\_\_\_% of residential energy will be from clean energy programs.
5. By 2026 \_\_\_\_% of all new City vehicles purchased should be alternative fuel vehicles, or use alternative fuel, or rank in the upper 20% of fuel-efficient vehicles.

**Goal 4: Direct growth to targeted growth areas with proper infrastructure in order to prevent low density sprawl**

**Objectives**

1. Housing should be located within safe walking distance or bicycle access from neighborhood commercial needs, parks and recreation, and public transit service
2. Housing developments in rural areas should be cluster development, leaving more open land, with designs that still allow for housing choices
3. In and around downtown and in existing denser developed areas, develop vacant land and maintain high and medium density housing
4. Discourage large lot development
5. Encourage appropriate development opportunities in residential and commercial areas
6. Ensure that new housing developments will not outstrip public works, public safety, and school services and traffic patterns
7. Enhance residential neighborhoods while creating diverse and new housing options on existing infrastructure within walking distance to services
8. Encourage Florence center, Leeds, Bay State, Hospital Hill and satellite commercial areas to serve local commercial needs and provide services that are sustainable and integral to the communities
9. Guide auto dependent businesses to new Business Park, "upper" King Street and guide truck dependent businesses to industrial areas.

Check for consistency with economic development goals on 8 & 9.



10 kilowatts of photovoltaics placed on the roof of John F. Kennedy Middle School will generate 10,000-kilowatt hours of power annually.

This is enough electricity to power approximately 3-4 energy efficient homes (Jason Doyle: Dispatch Coordinator for Central Services & Peggy McCloud: Director of Marketing for the Center of Ecological Technology).

**Strategies and Actions:**

1. Limit housing development in city's outlying areas, where it will stress municipal services and alter the character of the community.
2. Rezone City to be consistent with Sustainable Northampton Land Use Plan
3. Allocate infrastructure investments according to desired development patterns and density.
4. Upgrade sewer, water, and stormwater infrastructure to meet present and future demands
5. Develop a lot size policy based on population density, infrastructure, and desired development patterns.
6. Update TDR zoning bylaw
7. Adopt and apply 40R Smart Growth Zoning regulations

**Benchmarks:**

1. By 2026, \_\_\_\_% of new housing starts should be located within safe walking distance or bicycle access from neighborhood commercial needs, parks and recreation, and public transit service.

**Goal 5: Develop, protect, and enhance quality built-environments downtown and in village centers****Objectives**

1. Develop parks and greenspace on larger infill parcels where possible to keep urban and village centers attractive.
2. Encourage design and location of commercial and mixed-use buildings that is pedestrian scale and compatible with abutting residential neighborhoods as a means to buffer and create transitions between commercial districts and neighborhoods.
3. Minimize loss of historically or architecturally significant buildings.
4. Help residents discover historic and archaeological resources in Northampton.
5. Reduce loss of tree canopy. Strive to increase tree canopy in urbanized areas.
6. Expand public art - move

**Strategies and Actions:**

1. Develop urban design criteria to enhance gateways and village centers

2. Improve buffers between urban centers and surrounding neighborhoods.
3. Provide more public benches, cigarette disposal receptacles, trash cans, restrooms, and garden spaces downtown and in village centers
4. Increase landscaping along King Street to make it more appealing
5. Create gateways to downtown to create a welcome entry to the city
6. Convert commercial strips at the edge of downtown so that they look more like the central business district (consistent with ED goals?)
7. Provide for quality street trees and streetscape
8. Increase visibility of public road signs. Make sure private signs conform with downtown aesthetics

**Benchmarks:**

**Goal 6: Enhance downtown's standing as commercial, civic and cultural center of region**

**Goal 7: Ensure the Safe and Efficient Transportation of Information, Goods and People by Motor Vehicles, Bicycle, Foot and other means.**

**Objectives:**

1. Maintain an efficient transportation system
2. Ensure that safety is a primary goal in transportation improvements, systems, and operations, both to reduce crashes and to ensure that both vehicular and non-vehicular modes of traffic are safe and attractive to all users on all roads.
3. Maintain and develop a transportation system that encourages pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-motorized travel.
4. Expand and enhance the transit system.
5. Maintain a transportation system (through transportation demand management) that reduces air pollution and traffic congestion.
6. Minimize travel times and idling times
7. Ensure that the needs of bicycle, pedestrian, and other non-motorized vehicles as well as transit services are considered and addressed in the design, construction, and management of every project affecting the transportation system.
8. Ensure that environmental impacts are considered and adverse effects are minimized on all transportation project.
9. Ensure that economic development implications are considered and balanced with other City goals in all transportation policies, decisions, and improvements.
10. Ensure that all new privately-built streets include sidewalks, consistent with the Northampton Subdivision Regulations. When feasible and practical, concrete sidewalks on two sides of a street are desirable.
11. Calm traffic to preserve neighborhoods and villages

12. Ensure pedestrian, bicycle, non-motorized travel, and transit are addressed in every project affecting the transportation system
13. Maintain adequate, but not excessive, parking in core areas.

#### **Strategies and Actions:**

1. Review the Transportation Plan every two years. Amend the plan as needed based on experience and planning. Amendments should be approved by the same boards who approved the original plan
14. Ensure that safety is a primary goal in transportation improvements, systems, and operations, both to reduce crashes and to ensure that both vehicular and non-vehicular modes of traffic are safe and attractive to all users on all roads. The Police shall make available an annual report on motor vehicle collisions, their location, and whether personal injury is involved.
2. Maintain an in-house pavement management system to inform pavement management decisions and ensure an objective decision making process.
3. Design roadway improvements with consideration that “a bicyclist should be expected to be riding on any roadway {and a pedestrian walking along the roadway}, and therefore should be accommodated” (*Building Better Bicycling*, MassHighway, 1999).
4. Ensure catch basin covers are in a “bicycle-safe” format.
5. Undertake the following in all intersection studies and designs:
  - Minimize queuing times at intersections (and therefore vehicle emissions) while ensuring that intersections are pedestrian and bicycle friendly.
  - Design for appropriate truck movements consistent with truck needs and MassHighway requirements while exploring options that avoid excessively wide intersections, including the use of mountable curbs.
  - The suitability of roundabouts and mini-roundabouts will be evaluated during the preliminary engineering analysis for all intersections being considered for significant reconstruction, realignment, signalization, and four-way stops. Roundabouts are the favored intersection treatment for safety, efficiency, and environmental reasons, when appropriate. The Board of Public Works and the Transportation and Parking Commission shall be consulted before making any determination not to add a roundabout or mini-roundabout. (See Appendix C, Roundabout Evaluation.)
  - Ensure that all new and existing traffic signals incorporate audible pedestrian signals (dedicated pedestrian-only phase, pedestrian activated pedestrian-only phase, or a shared phase). Create a prioritized list of existing traffic signals where pedestrian signals are desired. Installation of pedestrian signals shall be made as funding becomes available. When no pedestrian infrastructure (sidewalks) currently exists, traffic signal equipment shall be installed that will allow for future pedestrian signalization. In deciding what kind of traffic signal to use, consider shared pedestrian phases (where pedestrians cross with parallel vehicle traffic allowing for shorter cycle cycles and less frustration).
6. Share relevant crash data with other city boards and departments whenever requested.
7. When funds become available, prepare a sign inventory and implement plan to bring signage and crosswalks into conformance with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Signage related to marked crosswalks is the first priority.

8. Layout new City streets to avoid creating cul-de-sacs and dead ends when possible and instead create a network of streets. Dead end streets, while desirable to some residents, add significantly to the delivery of city services and increases traffic flows to other local streets. Design streets to avoid creating new high-speed short cuts through residential neighborhoods.
9. Clear snow to provide safe driving conditions. The level of service available will be based on the resources the city is able and willing to allocate
10. Traffic congestion problems should generally be addressed by providing and enhancing alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles, rather than by adding roads or road lanes. The long-term effect on "induced traffic" (individuals' decision to drive on a particular road or route encouraged by perceived low congestion) should be carefully considered whenever roadways are reconfigured or widened in an attempt to relieve congestion. When enhancing intersections, as opposed to roadways, the City's goal is to avoid inducing additional traffic while reducing intersection queuing times, to avoid polluting idling and to allow smooth flow of traffic.
11. Roadways should be designed to be environmentally sensitive, to the extent feasible, with elements such as tree belts and curbs designed to improve the human environment and reduce impact on the natural environment.
12. DPW should provide the T&PC, BPW, Mayor, and City Council with annual lists of street and intersections which are planned for design or construction to aid in multi-board/department communications.
13. Examine all unsafe intersections, areas of excessive speeds, and areas where neighborhoods perceive a loss of quality of life to consider possible traffic calming efforts. Adopt a policy for identifying areas which need traffic calming (see Transportation Plan).
14. Develop and implement traffic calming models and standards for subdivision and zoning major site plan approval regulations.
15. Ensure that the design of all new, reconstructed, and reclaimed streets considers incorporating appropriate traffic calming measures, in consultation with the Board of Public Works and the Transportation and Parking Commission.
16. Implement traffic calming measures on projects listed in Appendix A (as it may be amended from time to time). Revise Appendix A to develop a more complete list of where traffic calming measures might be needed within the city. Use first few projects to develop traffic calming model (both methods and community outreach and involvement) that can be used elsewhere in the city.
17. Ensure that all developers provide sidewalks when necessary to serve their projects.
18. Ensure that all new and reconstructed streets include sidewalks unless right-of-way or engineering issues or the rural nature (based on projected traffic and development density when the street is built-out) of a street makes it not feasible. When sidewalks are installed, no consultation with the Board of Public Works or Transportation and Parking Commission is necessary. Otherwise, the Board of Public Works and the Transportation and Parking Commission shall be consulted before any determination is made not to add such a sidewalk.
19. Add wheelchair ramps and pavement markings necessary to make all sidewalks accessible for people with mobility disabilities.
20. Create and update a prioritized list of routes where sidewalks are desired, ready to take advantage of funding and construction opportunities. (See current list in Appendix A.)
21. Create and update a prioritized list of routes where curb extensions, raised intersections and other sidewalk improvements are desired, ready to take advantage of funding and

construction opportunities. (See current list in Appendix A.) Install such improvements as funding allows.

22. Submit a Capital Improvements request for a sidewalk management program modeled on the successful pavement management program to inventory sidewalks, sidewalk conditions, sidewalk usage, and to identify priorities for new or restored sidewalks. Consider whether Chapter 90 monies should be used for sidewalks or remain committed only for street improvements.
23. Prioritize streets for sidewalks where 1) vehicle/pedestrian conflicts are prevalent or that will 2) serve commercial areas, 3) serve children on their journey to school, and 4) reduce the need for school buses. Ensure that all reclaimed streets on the prioritized list shall include sidewalks unless right-of-way or engineering issues make it infeasible. The Board of Public Works and the Transportation and Parking Commission shall be consulted before any determination is made not to add such a sidewalk. The current prioritized list is attached as an Appendix and shall be amended from time to time.
24. Educate the public and enforce requirements to ensure the safety of sidewalks, including existing requirements that property owners abutting sidewalks:
  - Clear snow from sidewalks after a storm, with a priority on sidewalks in commercial areas and along arterial and collector streets (Section 19-19, Northampton Code of Ordinances); and control brush from growing over sidewalks or blocking visibility at intersections.
25. Develop a comprehensive city-wide bicycle system including existing and planned off-road bicycle paths, on-road bicycle lanes, and safe on-road bicycle routes. On-road bicycle routes and lanes that provide direct access to the growing rail-trail network and to urban core areas should receive a high priority. The system should include supporting services, such as signage, bicycle storage, and bicycle system maps and information.
26. Strive to add marked bicycle lanes to all surface arterial, collector, and federal aid roads whenever feasible (i.e., all surface roads except local roads.). See Roadway Classification map above.

When bike lane standards cannot be accommodated, investigate adding marked shoulders to provide the best accommodation feasible for bicyclists. (See Appendix, Bicycle Lane Design Guidelines).

- When arterials and collectors are constructed, reconstructed or reclaimed, add bicycle lanes unless a consensus is reached that right-of-way issues make it infeasible.
- When arterials and collectors that are at least 30 feet wide are restriped, add bicycle lanes unless safety issues make it infeasible. (See lane width inventory the Transportation Plan's "Bicycle Level of Service Evaluation.")
- Identified priority corridors for bike lane investigation and improvement are 1) King Street-- (see VHB King Street Corridor Study); 2) Bridge Street—the city maintained section; 3) South Street-- improving the bicycle lane layout, markings and signage; 4) Elm Street-- maintaining the bicycle lane layout and crosswalks; 5) Elm Street/Locust Street, Main Street, Florence--extend the bicycle lane.
- Create an ordinance prohibiting parking in a bike lane.
- When bike lanes are installed, no consultation is necessary with the BPW or T&PC. Otherwise, consult BPW and T&PC BEFORE any determination is made not to add bicycle lanes and improvements identified herein.

27. Transform the Northampton Bike Path and Norwottuck Rail Trail into a complete rail trail network with construction funding from federal, state and local sources. Design, permitting, and land acquisition will be completed locally. See Rail Trail Network map below.

Projects with estimated construction dates are shown. Actual construction is completely dependent on state and federal funds:

- Norwottuck Rail Trail Extension to Woodmont (2005)
  - Manhan Rail Trail Round House to Earle Street (2005)
  - Manhan Rail Trail Earle Street to Ferry Street, Easthampton (2006-2008)
  - Norwottuck Rail Trail Bridge Road to Leeds/Williamsburg town line (2006-2008)
  - Earle Street—Village at Hospital Hill (Village developer—2005-2006)
  - Village at Hospital Hill to High School (future project—2010)
  - Ice Pond/Route 66 to Florence Road Manhan Rail Trail Spur (2004-2005)
  - Jackson Street/Rail Trail off ramp
  - Rail Trail extensions, spurs, on-ramps throughout the City (see map) (2005-2010) Provide urban core parking to discourage commercial development
28. Install bicycle racks to provide all needed bicycle parking in public high bicycle traffic areas, including schools, downtown Florence, downtown Northampton, and the Village at Hospital Hill, to the extent grant-funded racks are available. Bicycle parking should be located close to building entrances and final destinations.
29. Ensure that private developers provide adequate bicycle parking to encourage bicycle travel. Bicycle parking should be located close to building entrances and final destinations. Include all-weather and theft resistant bicycle storage when appropriate. Develop a policy of when all-weather bicycle storage is appropriate
30. Obtain funds and install bicycle lockers and improve utilization of existing bicycle lockers.
31. Educate the public about the rights and responsibilities of bicyclists, to the extent that financial resources allow. Consider a bicycle safety curriculum at all school levels. Maintain web-based information on transportation facilities and transportation users' rights and responsibilities. Consider use of community television channel and newspapers to carry relevant stories and public service announcements.
32. Ensure higher visibility and better information about public transit stops.
33. Encourage efficient transit by locating bus stops directly on major transit routes and discouraging turn-offs into private developments (e.g. shopping centers) when such turn-offs increase transit time.
34. Continue to work with PVRTA and PVPC to consider a centralized public transit or multi-modal facility in Northampton.
35. Work with federal and state governments to ensure appropriate funding and levels of service for public transit.
36. Implement the recommendations of the Central Business District Parking Needs Study for parking demand mitigation, parking supply optimization, and parking supply shortfall.
37. Maximize the utilization of existing parking facilities and take other measures to reduce the need for new parking facilities while still encouraging the public to come downtown. Ensure high quality customer service and convenience of use to serve visitors to Northampton and ensure maximum system utilization.

38. Explore the development of a second structured parking facility downtown (deck or garage) to address parking shortfalls and allow visitors and residents to park in a centralized facility as a smart growth alternative to commercial and residential sprawl and to minimize traffic congestion from circulating vehicles seeking parking spaces. (Such a structure could be in conjunction with a multi-modal transportation facility.)
39. Ensure that on-street parking spaces in commercial areas not be eliminated to meet street improvements without a detailed alternatives assessment and a full community discussion.
40. Promote the use of special event shuttles to connect parking on the edge of downtown with downtown special events when appropriate.
41. Explore the potential for park-and-ride lots (e.g. in Leeds and the Village at Hospital Hill) to minimize traffic congestion
42. Ensure adequate parking is present in newly proposed large projects to meet their parking demand, consistent with efforts to reduce traffic, cars, and parking needs through transportation demand management.
43. Explore the potential for the City to offer a parking cashout, where City employees receive a choice of free parking or its equivalent value in cash, to encourage employees to come to work in modes other than single occupancy vehicles. Use cash out program to promote similar efforts in the private sector.
44. Enforce traffic and sidewalk regulations, ordinances, and statutes on the book in order to promote safety.
45. Incorporate reasonable steps to reduce peak-hour single-occupancy vehicle trips for new projects. Transportation demand management (TDM) techniques will be tailored to suit individual project needs, user needs, and the overall feasibility of the project while addressing City TDM goals. This may include:
  - Capital improvements (e.g., sidewalks, bicycle lanes, non-motorized trails and connections, bus stops, car pool parking);
  - Incentives for low-impact transportation (e.g., transit, car pooling, cycling, and walking) along with reduced incentives for single-occupancy vehicles (e.g., below-cost employee parking);
  - Policies to redistribute traffic impacts (e.g., set employee hours to avoid peak hour commutes).
46. In locating municipal facilities, one of the goals is to build close to urban centers and otherwise close to the population the facilities will serve.
47. Coordinate City land use policies and the land use plan with the city's transportation plan and shall consider the impacts of land use on the city's transportation system.
48. Develop capital improvements requests to identify and prioritize transportation improvements that support this plan and economic development
49. Encourage and facilitate transportation improvements that support economic development in areas identified for growth in the city's comprehensive and other economic development plans.
50. Monitor the status of infrastructure to work towards timely upgrades to meet the economic needs of the City.
51. Use Transportation Demand Management to provide alternatives to peak-hour single occupancy vehicles
52. Increase the number of official walking routes throughout the city.

- 53. Provide sidewalks within one mile of all schools.
- 54. Create pedestrian and bicycle friendly access along key gateways
- 55. Seek ways to fund alternative transit options including intra-city systems.

**Benchmarks:**

- 1. By 2026, increase the number of workers walking to work from approximately 14% to \_\_%
- 2. By 2026, increase the number of workers using public transportation from approximately 3% to \_\_\_\_%.

## **II. ECONOMY**

### **Economy Vision:**

Northampton is a vibrant community of artists, entrepreneurs, and locally owned businesses that feed the local economy, drawing on the abundant local innovation and brain power within the community. Businesses are an integral part of the community with business centers integrated with neighborhoods and the environment that allow everyone to grow and prosper. The Northampton economy is balanced and sustainable with a mix of local, state, regional, and global customer bases making it an integral part of the larger economy and a leader in cooperation and collaborations. At the same time, Northampton is a community where a diversity of residents and businesses can afford to live and work. An economy as envisioned above would likely foster a spirit of philanthropy and support of the arts, culture, and other civic organizations to create a truly thriving environment.

### **Goal #1: Vibrant and Distinctive Downtown and Village Centers**

#### **Policies:**

#### **1. Promote Northampton as a regional economic and cultural hub and destination.**

##### **Strategies & Actions:**

- a. Address social and economic conflicts in Downtown and Florence— panhandling, drug use.
- b. Develop a mechanism to support downtown management, marketing, and maintenance (e.g., Business Improvement District, marketing revenue sources, etc.).
- c. Expand parking and public transit infrastructure to support downtown and village center development. (Note: Need to refine to refine or add benchmarks to reflect the level and design of additional parking.)

#### **2. Expand access to goods and services in the City.**

##### **Strategies & Actions:**

- a. Reinvigorate the retail sector – address declining retail sales trends.
- b. Consider a year-round public market for local products – agricultural, crafts, etc.
- c. Address costs of high rental rates that prevent business from locating in Northampton.

#### **3. Encourage business and job growth in urban and commercial/industrial centers (e.g., downtown, village centers, targeted commercial/industrial zones).**

##### **Strategies & Actions: (Note: This overlaps with Environment & Land Use)**

- a. Encourage increased density, infill development, and mixed-use development.
- b. Develop consensus on King Street/Pleasant St. development – consider segmenting corridor into zones with different character traits and identifiable boundaries to encourage appropriate re-use of underutilized properties.

#### **4. Preserve unique historic and architectural character of downtown and village centers.**

### **Goal #2: Long-term Economic Sustainability, Security, and Opportunity**

#### **Policies:**

#### **1. Develop a versatile and diverse business and employment base.**

**Strategies & Actions:**

- a. Reinvigorate the manufacturing base – both traditional (plastics, machining) and technology.
- b. Develop key existing and emerging industry sectors with growth potential that build on Northampton's strengths (e.g., publishing, software, medical/science/bio technology, advanced technology manufacturing, creative economy, green businesses, tourism/retail).
- c. Create business and educational collaborations and support innovation and technology transfer/commercialization to grow local businesses and to retain creativity, entrepreneurship, and educated workforce from colleges and vocational schools in the region.
- d. Create collaborations with colleges to market Northampton as an attractive place to locate alumni businesses.
- e. Support institutional and non-profit businesses that are major employers, provide livable wages, provide important public benefit, and act as a catalyst for secondary economic activity (e.g., education, health care).
- f. Support business development that enhances the environmental and long-term sustainability of the community (e.g., agriculture and other land-based business, green business, and energy efficient design).
- g. Balance local/regional trade with export trade to generate new wealth coming into the community and to circulate and equitably share wealth within the community.

**2. Expand business development, job creation and retention, and livable wages.****Strategies & Actions:**

- a. Support entrepreneurship with business and financial assistance and targeted financial incentives where appropriate.
- b. Focus on business development that supports job creation, job opportunities, and higher than average wages for all Northampton residents.
- c. Retain and grow existing businesses in the City.
- d. Entrepreneurial training and start-up business assistance for low-income and limited English speaking residents.
- e. Support workforce development and training that is responsive to industry and worker trends and needs to ensure competitiveness in the regional and global economy, economic security/adaptability under changing economic conditions, career advancement, and secure standard of living.
- f. Encourage and support locally owned and operated businesses and buy local campaigns.
- g. Address ESL, literacy, adult basic education, and social equity needs of the workforce especially immigrant workers.
- h. Provide housing to ensure that people who work in Northampton can afford to live in Northampton.
- i. Create jobs and job training opportunities for youth and unemployed/underemployed workers.
- j. Job training programs for unemployed or underemployed.
- k. Develop a marketing campaign to attract compatible and desirable businesses, increase visibility in regional and national markets.

**3. Expand the commercial and industrial land inventory and tax base.**

**Strategies & Actions:**

- a. Develop key parcels to create a range of available sites (e.g., Northampton State Hospital, Rt. 10 Business Park, King Street).
- b. Support cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields sites and underutilized commercial/industrial buildings (e.g., Wire Works, Magnat, Cutlery, Pro Corp., Hill & Dale Mall, Three County Fairground).
- c. Support infill development in downtown and commercial/industrial zones (e.g., convert surface parking lots to development and replace with parking structures, increase density in urban core and commercial centers, encourage multi-story structures).
- d. Update and expand the Urban Renewal Plan to authorize the Northampton Redevelopment Authority or other public development entity to undertake development projects in targeted industrial and commercial areas including but not limited to King Street, the Rt. 10 Business Park, and downtown.

**4. Encourage and support sustainable business development and practices.****Strategies & Actions:**

- a. Provide model sustainable business practices as a resource for the business community.

**Goal #3: Thriving Cultural and Creative Economy****Policies:****1. Ensure affordable studio and live-work space to retain artists, cultural organizations, and businesses in Northampton.****Strategies & Actions:**

- a. Preserve and/or develop affordable arts/performance venues in the City.
- b. Support the development of affordable live-work and studio space.

**2. Develop cross connections between various sectors within the creative economy to strengthen its overall vitality (e.g., artists, designers, and technology).****Strategies & Actions:**

- a. Create a community arts bulletin board/website calendar.
- b. Create comprehensive inventory of arts organizations, businesses, and venues.
- c. Link creative businesses to business and financial assistance programs.

**3. Facilitate greater communication and collaboration among cultural organizations, artists, the business community, and City government.****Strategies & Actions:**

- a. Joint marketing campaigns between cultural, retail, and hospitality sectors.
- b. Coordinated fundraising by non-profit cultural organizations to businesses.
- c. Preserve and enhance arts education in public schools.

**Goal #4: Positive Business Environment****Policies:**

1. Support responsible business development; foster communication and understanding between businesses, government, and residential uses; and recognize business as an integral part of a sustainable community.
2. Maintain an appropriate level of environmental and community protection while balancing the impacts of regulation on businesses and the economic health of the community.

**Strategies & Actions:**

- a. Facilitate problem solving, permit streamlining, regulatory simplification, and a customer service approach.
  - b. Assess and ensure consistency and balance between City policies in relation to economic development goals, other City goals, and financial health of the City (e.g., regulations, taxes, fees).
  - c. Evaluate impact of permit/other fees in retaining/attracting businesses and compare to other communities.
3. Invest in infrastructure to support desired business development in areas targeted for business growth (e.g., broadband technology, sewer, water, drainage, roadway, parking, and transit).

**Goal #5: Leadership in Local and Regional Collaborations**

**Policies:**

1. Continue and expand regional economic development collaborations to leverage strengths and effectiveness (i.e. Pioneer Valley Connect, Plan for Progress, Economic Development Partners).
2. Support regional coordination and collaboration in land use planning, economic development, transportation, smart growth, and creative municipal cost/revenue sharing.

**Goal #6: Maintain the Quality of Life that is a Strength and Competitive Advantage**

**Policies:**

1. Foster a tolerant, inclusive, civic-minded populace that embraces diversity.
2. Continue to ensure quality arts, cultural, historic, and educational resources as a vital part of the community and as integral to Northampton's distinctive character.
3. Continue to ensure concentrated development patterns, open space protection, recreational resources, and protection of natural beauty and environmental quality.

(Note: Committee also wanted this goal to be incorporated into overall vision statement for the plan.)

### **III. EQUITY**

#### **Equity Vision:**

Northampton is a tolerant, inclusive, and civic-minded community that embraces diversity with a superb quality of life and opportunity for all community residents. It is a community of interconnected neighborhoods where residents feel safe from crime and have quality opportunities to live affordably and work in their community. It is a community where all residents have the opportunity to excel socially, economically, and academically and have the opportunity to lead an independent and successful life within the community.

**Goal #1: Retain a diversity of population and incomes and invest in all segments of the community.**

#### **Policies:**

**1. Reach out to marginalized populations to ensure all feel welcome in the City.**

##### **Strategies & Actions:**

**2. Ensure civic and physical accessibility for all.**

##### **Strategies & Actions:**

- a. Improve property maintenance at public and private low-income housing properties.
- b. Improve accessibility features of public sidewalks, public transit, and public buildings.

**3. Ensure safety for all.**

##### **Strategies & Actions:**

- a. Increase community policing at public and low-income housing projects, downtown, and Florence.
- b. Strict enforcement of laws related to drug dealing.
- c. More anti-racism/anti-discrimination, anti-violence, training for school staff and students to create an environment of tolerance, diversity, and fairness in public schools so all children and families feel valued.
- d. Implement focused school and public anti-violence programs especially around domestic/family violence.

{Note: Need to cross-reference with CDBG Consolidated Plan Goals}

**4. Improve housing affordability to retain a diversity of residents.**

##### **Strategies & Actions:**

- a. Increase amount and variety of housing options at different levels of affordability—both subsidized and market rate
  - Increase number of enhanced SROs
  - Increase availability of housing—both rental and ownership opportunities—for those between 80 and 120% of AMI
  - Explore, develop and use zoning tools to contribute to the preservation and development of housing at all levels of affordability
  - Preserve and create a full range of mixed-income housing options

- Explore the option of using land trusts to keep the costs of housing affordable (e.g. see the story “Buy the House, Lease the Land,” on NPR at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5598859>)
- b. Retain current stock of public and private low-income housing
  - Announce and begin a meaningful partnership with landlords to support them in preserving “market-rate affordable” units as rental units
  - Work with owners/managers of existing subsidized units to preserve affordability
  - Engage in community education to promote these goals
- c. Continue to support first-time homebuyer programs, and work together with Valley CDC to broaden their reach and effectiveness
- d. Do what we can to address the conversion of rental units to condominiums
  - Determine the actual number of condo conversions over the past 1-5 years
  - How many rental units have been lost—and at what levels?
  - Impact on rental housing market?
  - Evaluate tools available to the City to address the issue (in terms of zoning, permitting, etc)
- e. Facilitate the development of affordable live-work space to attract and retain artists (and start-up businesses) in the City
  - Evaluate available zoning tools and support the most flexible zoning possible that is consistent with safety standards—to make possible both some commercial/artistic use in residential areas, and some residential use in commercial buildings

**Goal #2: Ensure quality education and academic achievement for all.**

**Policies:**

**1. Support public education.**

**Strategies & Actions:**

- a. Support increased funding resources for public schools.
- b. Support dual language learners.
- c. Ensure adequate resources in all grades
- d. Support School Committee goal/guidelines for small class sizes.
- e. Reduce the achievement gap - Ensure non-English speaking students are succeeding (tutoring and support programs).
- f. Improve sex/drug/alcohol awareness education in the schools.
- g. Provide support to increase parent involvement in children’s educational success (orientation sessions-especially for Latino parents, bilingual support staff, teacher/parent follow-up, child care/transportation for low-income parents).
- h. Support for parents of special education students – advocacy, bilingual/bicultural special education providers, and individualized and specialized equipment.
- i. Targeted dropout prevention programs.
- j. Support vocational education.
- k. Assess and provide school facility needs.

**2. Support life long learning opportunities.**

**Strategies & Actions:**

**Goal #3: Ensure adequate and affordable childcare and health care.**

**Policies:**

**1. Work on local, state, and federal level to advocate for childcare and health care accessibility for all.**

**Strategies & Actions:**

- a. Support Cooley Dickinson Hospital as a critical institution for access to health care in Northampton and Hampshire County.
- b. Investigate a community health care clinic to provide health care access to low-income residents.

**Goal #4: Ensure environmental justice in all Northampton neighborhoods.**

**Policies:**

1. Ensure equal and adequate protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process.